

Utilizing Online Discussion Forums in Teaching EAP Writing

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Abstract

The current research explored a method for utilizing learners' written output shared with their peers through online discussion forums. Students are encouraged to refer to their peers' essays and comments when they work on their drafts and revisions. Overall, the findings of the current research indicated that sharing the written output with peers could satisfy perceived competence and relatedness, whereas improvements to the method may be necessary to satisfy the need for autonomy. Students' comments illustrated that recognizing the same challenges with peers and knowing how they addressed the issue gave inspiration as to how they should tackle the problems.

INTRODUCTION

Although accuracy is often the focus of language learning, overemphasizing it can demotivate learners. As learners' performance tends to be seen as flawed attempts that need to be corrected by teachers, their written products are hardly considered as samples that their peers can refer to while working on their writing. The products, however, can potentially contribute to peer learning even when they are not perfect in terms of accuracy. For learners to help each other, they need to feel safe, comfortable, and free from risks of losing face or potentially offending their peers. For example, collaborative activities with peers may have risks of losing face or offending others, especially when they are encouraged to point out what they should correct. In particular, East Asian students are reluctant to take on teachers' roles (Banister, 2020) as students from China and Japan tend to feel uncomfortable giving negative feedback to their peers (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Lin & Yang, 2011), and they prefer working individually (Peretz, 2003; Storch, 2005). It is, therefore, necessary to have an alternate method to traditional peer interactions where learners are motivated to practice language skills.

The current research set out to explore a method for utilizing learners' written output shared through online discussion forums to increase their motivation to learn English. The

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method was employed in the English courses, which were taught entirely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The method enables learners to gain insights from their peers' writings without the need to correct each other. They can learn from the writing and reflection process of their peers, such as how they have revised their essays, what issues they have found, and how they have planned to improve the drafts. The essays and comments are shared on discussion forums on the Learning Management System (LMS). Students are encouraged to refer to their peers' drafts, revisions, and comments while working on their own drafts and revisions. The teacher emphasized what they did well when introducing their peers' writings to the class so that students could focus more on the positive aspects of writing, which they may, then, incorporate into their own drafts. As such, students are encouraged to learn from their peers without the need to point out negative aspects. Students can see various samples written by those who share the same learning experience, and such student contributions can increase exposure to relevant input and raise their motivation and engagement (Flowerdew, 2016). It is hoped that this research will provide new insights into peer interactions and motivation in a wide variety of language learning contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Peer Interactions and Collaborative Activities in EFL/EAP Contexts

While peer reviews and peer feedback can raise students' awareness of audience considerations (Leki, 1993), such interactions do not necessarily motivate students to learn. It has been reported that students tend to prefer teacher feedback to peer feedback (Lee, 2015; Lynch, McNamara, & Seery, 2012; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang, Badger, & Yu, 2006; Zhang, 1995). They were also afraid of offending their peers by giving negative feedback, which discouraged them from providing specific feedback (Lin & Yang, 2011). This can be partly due to their cultural values attached to cooperation and harmony in relationships (Carson & Nelson, 1996), which is often found in the teaching contexts of China and Japan. Therefore, it is generally suggested that practitioners should raise students' comfort levels by providing them with a supportive context and scaffolding (Lin & Yang, 2011). This is necessary because peer interactions can generate unbalanced power relationships where learners neglect their peers' opinions or impose their ideas on others, which may make them feel incompetent (Tajabadi, Ahmadian, Dowlatabadi, & Yazdani, 2020). Additionally, students may resist having responsibility for other students. Students tend to resist peer assessment (Liu, 2006) because they are against the idea that some may have power over others (Falchikov, 2001), and many feel uncomfortable grading their peers harshly (Isaacs, 2001). In order to remove students'

reluctance to provide constructive criticism, teachers may need to provide them with experience and support in a non-threatening context (Lynch, McNamara, & Seery, 2012). Therefore, for successful peer interactions, support and solidarity among learners should be encouraged to provide them with a safe space (Young & Tedick, 2016).

As students may feel uncomfortable providing feedback to peers or evaluating them, they cannot be the replacement of teachers. They are often considered less qualified as feedback providers or evaluators than teachers, which may make them feel less confident and competent. Banister (2020) observed that learners appear to resist the idea of the teacher giving authority to peers, particularly in teaching contexts where teachers are traditionally considered as the primary source of knowledge, rather than facilitators. For example, among international students from various backgrounds, a female Japanese student expressed concern over criticizing her peers because it is uncommon to do so in her native language (Banister, 2020). In order to avoid such risks, students should be encouraged to learn from each other rather than to provide suggestions. They can learn from their peers' writing processes and written products, which would provide them with increased exposure to relevant writing samples. While they may feel unqualified to evaluate others as a teacher's replacement, they would feel qualified as a member of a learning community.

As there are some disadvantages of peer feedback and assessment, teachers may think of collaborative activities without peer feedback or assessment. However, students voiced a preference for completing tasks individually, showing reluctance to work on writing tasks in pairs or groups (Peretz, 2003; Storch, 2005). Storch (2005) revealed that among students from Asian countries, including Thailand, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, and China, female Japanese students reported that they could not concentrate while working in pairs as much as they could when they were working individually, as they believed writing is an individual activity. They also reported a strong fear of losing face because of their perceived incompetence. Peer activities, therefore, can negatively affect the motivation of students, particularly female Japanese students because they may feel reluctant to work in pairs and groups even when it is not required to evaluate others nor provide feedback to their writings.

However, removing peer interactions may lead to loss of benefits, including awareness of audience considerations (Leki, 1993) and critical thinking skills, which can be enhanced by peer interactions (Liu, 2006; Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2000; Lynch, McNamara, & Seery, 2012). Peer feedback, for example, can promote learning by having students think more critically (Liu, 2006; Lynch, McNamara, & Seery, 2012; Orsmond, Merry, & Reiling, 2000). It is, thus, suggested that peer feedback may be more effective in the learning process than

assessment or evaluation (Liu, 2006). Awareness of audience considerations is important because recognizing the audience and competitors may motivate students to engage in autonomous learning (Chen & Brown, 2012). Therefore, the current research set out to explore methods to have students think of peers as both audience and performers.

Intrinsic Motivation in EFL/EAP Contexts

The self-determination theory or SDT (Deci and Ryan, 1985; 2000) is a theoretical framework for analyzing student engagement and motivation. According to the theory, people are intrinsically motivated when they decide to engage in activities for their inherent enjoyment and excitement without external motives, whereas they are extrinsically motivated by rewards or desire to avoid punishment (Ryan and Deci, 2000). Maintaining intrinsic motivation (IM) requires three psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The need for autonomy is satisfied when behaviors are voluntary. For example, students are autonomous when they can make decisions to plan and manage their learning. They may set their goals and decide what they should do to accomplish the desired results. The need for competence can be satisfied when students feel they have the ability to complete tasks or achieve a certain level. Relatedness refers to a need for belonging to a certain group of people, which can be satisfied by collaborations and interactions with peers.

Peer interactions may positively affect learner motivation, especially when combined with independent learning, where students have time to feel ready to contribute to the class. Awareness of the audience motivates learners to engage in autonomous learning because they often feel a sense of competition with their peers (Chen & Brown, 2012). They are motivated by the need to incorporate positive aspects of their peers' written products, particularly when they are relevant to their own goals (Dörnyei, 2005). As collaborative activities are often associated with relatedness, it may be expected that face-to-face interactions in classrooms can motivate students more than independent learning or online learning, where students cannot see each other. However, students who experience independent online learning in addition to peer interactions tend to feel more competent, related, and autonomous than those who studied in traditional classrooms (Akbari, Pilot, & Simons, 2015; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). Students may feel competent because they have time to prepare for and check the accuracy of their output before they say or write something while interacting with their peers (Akbari, Pilot, & Simons, 2015; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). As a result, they are ready to engage in learning with peers. Additionally, those who do not like to speak in front of others can learn to overcome their shyness (Akbari, Pilot, & Simons, 2015).

Independent online learning, thus, allows students to work in a context with little risk of

losing face while interacting with peers. In particular, the majority of students who experienced independent online learning were more motivated to learn autonomously, not requiring guidance from the teacher as much as those who studied in traditional face-to-face classrooms (Zainuddin & Perera, 2019). These findings may indicate that creating a learning environment where students can learn without risks of losing face by providing time to prepare for output may satisfy the three psychological needs. Providing independent online learning, in addition to peer interactions, is considered an effective method to satisfy such needs since it allows students to contribute to the class when they are ready.

Previous studies regarding motivation indicated that peer interactions could enhance motivation when there is little risk of losing face. In particular, Japanese students should be allowed to work individually during the writing process without the need to provide feedback to peers. This is because they tend to prefer working individually (Peretz, 2003; Storch, 2005), show concerns over peer feedback (Banister, 2020; Carson & Nelson, 1996; Lin & Yang, 2011), and feel a strong fear of losing face (Storch, 2005). On the other hand, providing opportunities for students to gain exposure to their peers' output is effective in that it raises the awareness of the audience, which motivates them to learn autonomously, incorporating positive aspects of their peers' products. Therefore, the current teaching context had students gain exposure to relevant writing samples while providing an opportunity to contribute to the class when they were ready. Instead of peer feedback, they were encouraged to refer to their peers' drafts and reflections and share what they learned from them.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Assessing the Benefits of Sharing the Written Output of Students with Their Peers

The current research set out to examine how sharing the written output (essay drafts, revisions, and self-reflections) with their peers affects students' motivation to learn English. The research questions were as follows:

RQ1. Were the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy satisfied by sharing students' written output with their peers?

RQ2. Was the IM to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation enhanced by sharing students' written output with peers?

It was expected that the process of sharing learners' written drafts, products, and reflections could enhance the IM of learners, satisfying the three psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy. These needs should be satisfied to enhance IM, which can also be categorized into three types: IM to know, IM to accomplish things, and IM

to experience stimulation (Vallerand et al., 1992). Both the psychological needs and types of IM were examined in this study. Students were encouraged to refer to their peers' writings as samples while working on their drafts and revisions. They worked on tasks individually since the course was entirely conducted online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rationale Behind the Hypothesis

As this method did not provide students with opportunities to give feedback or evaluation to their peers or to work on writing collaboratively, this does not match the concept of traditional peer interactions. However, students were encouraged to learn from each other through sharing their writing processes and reflections. This method would positively affect their motivation because it would raise students' awareness of the audience while removing the risks of losing face.

Students would be more autonomous when they are aware of the audience. This is due to a sense of competition they feel when referring to their peers' written products while working on their tasks (Chen & Brown, 2012). They are also motivated to incorporate positive aspects of their peers' writings that are relevant to their own goals (Dörnyei, 2005). They would also gain increased exposure to relevant writing samples. Since it has been pointed out that materials selected by teachers may be irrelevant to students' needs and interests (Mishan, 2005), encouraging student contribution would raise their motivation and engagement by increasing the relevant input (Flowerdew, 2016). Indeed, research has demonstrated that learning materials created by students promoted engagement and motivation in learning tasks (Lambert, Philp, & Nakamura, 2017). Similarly, using writing samples selected and edited by learners have been shown to enhance the perceived relevance of tasks, which led to increased motivation (Hirano, Vincent, Sasao, & Takahashi, 2019). In the current teaching context, students worked on tasks individually and shared their written assignments with peers before the deadline. They had enough time, 4 to 5 days, to complete the task. This learning environment may have increased their motivation, as independent online learning experiences satisfy the three psychological needs more when compared to traditional classrooms (Akbari, Pilot, & Simons, 2015; Zainuddin & Perera, 2019).

METHODS AND PROCEDURE

Participants and Teaching Context

The research was conducted in English courses at two private women's universities in Kyoto, Japan. Five courses were conducted with a total of 120 students. All courses were taught online, lasting 15 weeks. Most students were first- or second-year students of various

majors, except for one course, which was designed for 20 second-year nutrition-major students. The average English level of the students is around A2 on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Of the 120 students, 53 responded to a questionnaire, and 37 students agreed to offer their writings and reflections for analysis. The courses were taught by a Japanese teacher who also conducted the present study.

Data Collection and Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through an online questionnaire ($n=53$) and the students' written assignments were submitted online ($n=37$). A five-point Likert scale was employed for the questionnaire (Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree). The quantitative data of the questionnaire measured how sharing the written output affected their perceived competence, relatedness, autonomy, and IM to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation. The qualitative data, such as submissions of essays and comments, were used as supplementary data to provide examples of students' perceptions. The relevant comments were selected to demonstrate their perceptions of each section.

Course Description and Procedure

The lessons were designed around having students independently work on written assignments through the LMS. The course materials, including voiced slides, videos, and resources for self-study, were provided through the platform. Online resources included embedded videos, URLs for dictionaries, and a corpus of academic phrases. As students were allowed to use applications and websites for machine translation, many of the students reported that they used them frequently, although they wanted to use them less often in the future. Using these resources, students completed tasks individually and shared them online with their peers through comment threads on the LMS. Students were required to submit two to three essays, Essay 1 (in Week 7 or 8), Essay 2 (in Week 13; nutrition majors were not required to submit this essay), and Final Essay (in Week 15). Aside from the essays, students were assigned tasks to share writings or reflections on discussion threads every week (see Table 1 for an example of courses; course content varies except that all courses had multiple essay submissions, a revision, and review session followed by teacher feedback).

Table 1

Course Outline

Week	Objectives	Activities
1	Self-Introduction	Students introduced themselves in English on a discussion forum.
2	Genre Awareness	Students watched videos and read sample writings from various genres and shared their thoughts about the differences they noticed.
3	Brainstorming	Students shared their ideas on a topic for Essay 1 on a forum.
4	Thesis Statement	Students wrote their ideas on a thesis statement for Essay 1.
5	Draft 1, Hedges 1	Students wrote their first draft. They also learned about the use of hedges.
6	Draft 2, Hedges 2	Students wrote their second draft about another topic. They learned other hedges.
7	Essay 1	Students chose either Draft 1 or 2 to revise and submit it as Essay 1.
8	Feedback	The teacher provided feedback on Essay 1.
9	Revision	Students revised Essay 1 according to the feedback and added comments on how they revised it, the challenges they faced, and how they would address them. They also edited the essays to emphasize important aspects of essays so that their peers could refer to them. The revised essays were shared on a forum.
10	Review	Students commented on what they learned from their peers' essays and comments, which were then shared on a forum.
11	Draft 3	Students worked on a draft for Essay 2.
12	Draft 4	Students revised a draft for Essay 2.
13	Essay 2	Students submitted Essay 2 with comments on challenges and how to address them.
14	Feedback	The teacher provided feedback on Essay 2.
15	Final Essay	Students submitted their Final Essay with comments on their challenges and goals.

In addition to comment threads, students' writings and insights selected by the teacher were featured in the class. The drafts were partially modified by the teacher to provide better instructions, which were explained as such to the students. The teacher emphasized positive aspects of writings that peers could potentially incorporate into their writings. The teacher also provided feedback to the students' essays individually with voice recordings, written commentary, and marked checklists. The students revised drafts accordingly, which were also shared online with highlights on modified parts and comments to explain how they revised them. The revised drafts included reflections regarding the challenges they faced while working on assignments and what they thought they should do to address the problems. By sharing challenges and goals, the students could share their experiences with

their peers; they were allowed to write comments in Japanese so that they could feel comfortable sharing their observations and reflections. After completing the first essay, they shared their opinions as to what they learned from their writings, revisions, and reflections (either in Week 9 or 10).

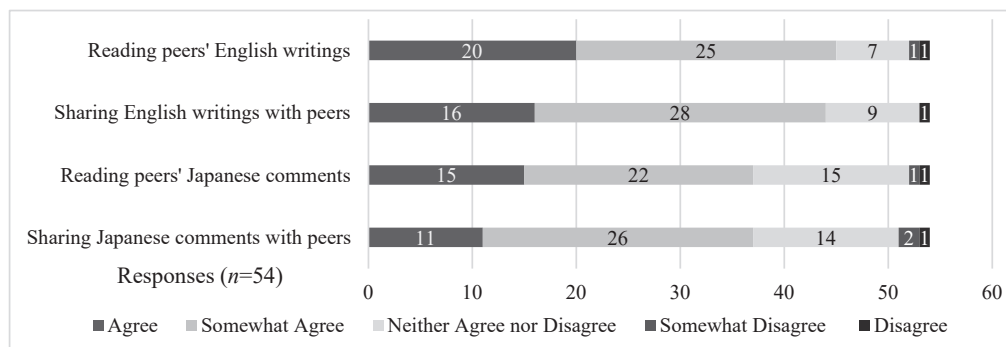
Throughout the course, the teacher encouraged the students to refer to their peers' written output. The revisions of Essay 1 were recommended as samples to refer to because they contained informative details of how the students addressed the challenges and how they could improve drafts and writing skills in the future. Seeing their peers' revision processes would allow students to avoid repeating the same mistakes and find solutions to the challenges. In order to make it easier for peers to see the important aspects, the teacher had the students edit their essays. For example, cohesive devices, such as conjunctions and transitional phrases, were emphasized in bold. When students had problems selecting proper cohesive devices, they were encouraged to see their peers' edited revisions, where they could easily find the expressions in context. In terms of the essay structure, the thesis statement and concluding sentences were emphasized with underlines in students' revised drafts. For example, some of the students who struggled with consistency were encouraged to see how their peers rephrased the thesis statement in concluding sentences, maintaining consistency. While they were encouraged to incorporate positive aspects of their peers' writings, they were also instructed to consider whether certain phrases or structures fit their writings. Overall, students were encouraged to consider their peers' essays as samples they could refer to, instead of erroneous attempts that needed to be corrected.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Perceived Competence

The data collected from the questionnaire and written assignments were analyzed to answer the first research question: were the needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy satisfied by sharing students' written output with their peers? The data showed that 83.3% (45 out of 54) of the questionnaire respondents thought reading peers' English writings improved their English skills (selecting either Agree or Somewhat Agree; see Figure 1), indicating a positive influence on their perceived competence. Additionally, most respondents (81.4%) reported that sharing their English writings enhanced their competence.

Figure 1

Students' Perceived Competence

In addition to English writing, more than 68.5% of the respondents perceived improved competence by both reading their peers' Japanese comments and writing comments to share with their peers. This shows that both reading their peers' writings as well as sharing their own writings with peers in English and Japanese were found to enhance the competence of most students. Many students commented that reading their peers' essays allowed them to acquire knowledge and expressions. One student, for example, stated in her reflections that she could not correctly use conjunctions at the beginning, but she understood how to use them after looking at her peers' essays.

Perceived Relatedness

While relatedness generally refers to a need for belonging to a certain group of people, which can be satisfied by collaboration and interaction with peers, the definition of the term is adapted to fit the research purpose. The study investigated whether students think they were able to learn from their peers and contribute to the latter's learning outcomes. The data indicated that most respondents (83.3%) felt that they learned about English from their peers by sharing their written assignments. Half of them thought they were able to contribute to the class by sharing the assignments. Although this number may not seem significant, it is a notable number considering the lack of confidence and anxiety reported at the beginning of the class by many students in their self-introduction posts and the number of students who responded that they were not good at English (78.3%). The number may even increase if it is emphasized that their writing process, including revisions and reflections, can be useful as written products.

In addition to the learning aspect, the need for relatedness could have been satisfied by recognizing the same challenges in the peers' comments. One student appeared to have

addressed her challenges by seeing her peers' writing processes. She recognized the same mistakes in their writings, such as being too subjective and using colloquial expressions. However, she also realized that her peers' revised essays were in proper academic language, indicating that awareness towards improving the first draft made the revised essay more convincing and academic. Specifically, avoiding repetitions and using various phrases appeared to have made the essays more expressive. This motivated her to be aware of those points and to recognize the importance and difficulty of writing in academic language.

Similarly, one student unexpectedly noticed many people who were facing the same challenge. Another student said she felt sympathy and agreed with her peer, who said it was difficult to write in English even when she had the idea in Japanese. She also expressed her resolution to avoid using improper expressions, as her peer commented that she accidentally used such expressions. Although they did not interact with each other as much as in traditional peer interactions, they appeared to have addressed their challenges collectively, getting inspiration from each other.

Perceived Autonomy

Sharing writings and comments did not seem to have promoted the perceived autonomy of the students as much as it had enhanced perceived competency and relatedness; only 46.3% (25 out of 54) of the respondents stated that sharing assignments with peers motivated them to set their goals to study English. However, several questionnaire responses and comments of reflections showed that peer reflections and revisions were indeed useful in considering what they should do to improve. One student said detailed Japanese comments about how they improved the drafts were useful. Such comments made it easier for her to set a goal and think of the possible ways to apply what she learned from her peers' essays in her own drafts. Another student stated that peers' comments on what they improved were useful because the comments encouraged them to pay more attention to those points in the future. Similarly, there was a questionnaire response in which one student said other people improved from the same feedback she had received, which motivated her to study harder so that she could use appropriate expressions like them. This echoes the findings of Dörnyei (2005), in that students are motivated when they feel the need to incorporate what they thought useful in their peers' products, particularly if it is relevant to their own goals. While awareness of the audience and a sense of competition with peers motivate students to be autonomous learners when they refer to their peers' written products to improve their tasks, as reported by Chen and Brown (2012), the current case is different from that study in that peers play both the roles of audience and competitors. In order to increase perceived autonomy, it may be necessary to scaffold them to set their goals, referring to peer

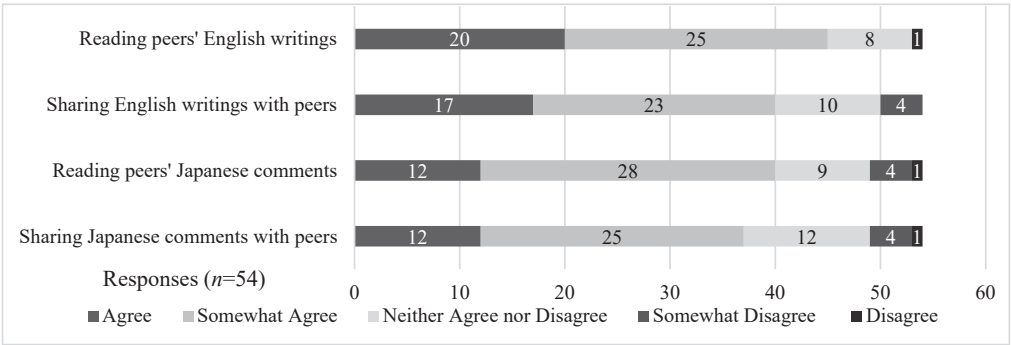
reflections.

Intrinsic Motivation

The questionnaire data were analyzed to explore the second research question: was the IM to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation enhanced by sharing students' written output with their peers? Before discussing specific types of IM, to give a general idea, the perceived motivation of students is illustrated in Figure 2. The questionnaire data indicated that their motivation was enhanced by reading their peers' English writings, with 83% (45 out of 54 respondents) reporting increased motivation. Overall, more than 68.5% of the respondents thought writing and sharing with their peers as well as reading the latter's written output both in English and Japanese enhanced their motivation to learn.

Figure 2

Students' Perceived Motivation



More specifically, the current study examined three categories of IM, such as the IM to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation (adapted from Vallerand et al., 1992). IM to know can be enhanced when students are driven by the need to feel satisfied by learning new knowledge. Half of the respondents reported that sharing assignments motivated them to know more about English, indicating that it may have promoted IM to know for about half of the students. As the lectures were focused more on topics and content than linguistic aspects, more students may have reported the increased IM to know if there was a separate question asking whether sharing assignments motivated them to know more about the topics. Many students commented in reflections that they learned about topics featured in their peers' writings such as LGBT, gender equality, and racism. One student, for instance, learned something new when she read her peers' essays, which were written on the same topic but from different perspectives. She argued that the opposing viewpoints made her think about how they would view the points she had made in her essay. Such experience

encouraged her to do more research about the opposing perspectives in order to make her argument convincing. This is an example to demonstrate how sharing written output motivated a student to know more about the topic and argument as well as to think critically.

Students have IM to accomplish things when they want to complete a task or achieve a certain level of satisfaction that they get from achieving their goal. Sharing writings appeared to have increased the IM to accomplish things of most students, with 70% of the respondents stating that sharing assignments made them want to be able to use English. More specifically, two students commented in reflections of final assignments that they would like to be able to use cohesive devices properly; thus, they wanted to refer to their peers' essays for the use of such expressions because it was hard for them to use the expressions correctly without overusing the same ones. In addition to the linguistic aspect, many commented on the use of sources to support the argument. For example, one student wrote in the reflection that she wanted to be able to cite reliable sources as evidence in the next assignment because she could not do it properly, unlike some of her peers.

IM to experience stimulation is promoted when students are driven by the sensation that they get from new experiences. A little over half of the students (51.9%, 28 out of 54) agreed with the statement, "Sharing assignments motivated me to use English to try something new," suggesting that IM to experience stimulation may have been enhanced by reading peers' essays. Many students appeared to have enjoyed reading the diverse opinions of their peers. One student found it intriguing that her peers discussed issues from different perspectives. Another student said it was interesting to see a wide variety of viewpoints and arguments, citing different evidence even when they were writing about the same topic. It was also suggested in a comment that it was easy for a student to read almost all the writings shared by peers (which "left an impression" on her, in her words, implying how unexpectedly easy it was), most of which were interesting and informative to her. Some commented that they would like to incorporate counterarguments in their essays, getting inspired by their peers' diverse opinions.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings of the current research demonstrated that sharing students' written output with peers could satisfy perceived competence and relatedness, while improvements to the method may be necessary to satisfy the need for autonomy. Most students thought that both the acts of sharing their writings with peers and reading shared writings improved

their competence in English. It is also worth noting that some students appeared to have addressed their challenges collaboratively, regardless of the lack of traditional peer interactions. Their comments illustrated that upon recognizing the fact that they shared the same challenges with their peers and knowing how others addressed the issues, they were inspired to explore how they should tackle the problems by themselves in the future. Additionally, students appeared to have found it interesting to know diverse perspectives, specifically the opposing viewpoints of the same topic, which gave them new perspectives. This may have led to increased IM as well as enhanced critical thinking skills. In order to increase autonomy, teachers can incorporate activities in which students are allowed to set their learning goals and reflect on their learning process, which could later be shared with their peers.

The generalizability of these results is subject to limitations as the sample was limited to female students at a women's college. Another weakness of the current study is that it failed to investigate students' anxiety regarding sharing their writings with peers despite the anxiety reported by female Japanese students concerning peer activities, which were revealed by previous research (Banister, 2020; Storch, 2005). Further research could, therefore, explore how sharing writings through online discussion forums can affect students' anxiety and motivation in various educational contexts.

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